

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH  
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO  
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Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting  
October 14, 2005

Members:

James Allen  
Meredith Andreucci  
Hon. Vince Anello  
Drew Cerza  
Hon. Elise Cusack  
Hon. William Davignon  
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti  
Tim Doolittle  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Matthew Enstice  
Samuel Ferraro  
Richard Geiger  
Hon. Timothy Kennedy  
Celeste Lawson  
Maria Lehman  
Hon. Peter McMahon  
Hon. Gerald Meal  
Hal Morse  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Dr. Gary Praetzel  
Melinda Rath Sanderson  
F. Tim Reese  
David Rosenwasser  
Hon. William Ross  
Diane Ruzala  
Laura St. Pierre  
Hon. Demone Smith  
Hector Titus  
Timothy Wanamaker  
Charles Webb  
Peter Wendel

**Present:** Burmaster, Weinstein, Andreucci, Anello, Doolittle, Ellis, Enstice, Ferraro, Geiger (proxy), McMahon, Morse, O'Connor, Praetzel, Rath Sanderson, Reese, Rosenwasser, Ross, Ruzala, Webb (proxy), Wendel, Casale, Witul

**Excused:** Allen, Cerza, Lawson, Lehman, Meal, Smith, Titus, Holt, Sheffer

**Absent:** Cusack, Davignon, DeBenedetti, Kennedy, St. Pierre, Wanamaker

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. ENRP Member Meredith Andreucci and USA Niagara Development Corporation were thanked for hosting the meeting. Thanks were also given to ENRP Member Vince Anello for arranging parking, and to ENRP Member Wright Ellis for his annual gift of freshly picked apples.

Minutes of the June, 2005 meeting were approved.

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Hon. George Holt, Jr.  
John Sheffer, II  
Lawrence Witul

The Co-Chairs welcomed new member Canisius College Women's Business Center Executive Director Melinda Rath Sanderson, and recognized departing members John Sheffer and Laurence Rubin.

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

Co-Chair Burmaster began our strategic planning discussion by thanking ENRP Member Peter Wendel for facilitating the process, the members who participated in the three strategic planning sessions over the summer, and all who attended the September subcommittee meetings to discuss the recommendations for the organization.

Burmaster continued by asserting that the core of what ENRP does is needed, as shown by our core values and successes. He added that one result of the strategic planning is that leadership will be looking more to the membership for outreach, ideas, new members, and funding.

As for the housing of ENRP, Burmaster called the last two years at the University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth a “great relationship,” but under a new director the Institute is moving in a new direction, and therefore will not continue the employer-employee relationship. A new home for ENRP is needed. ENRP Member Gary Praetzel offered the possibility of housing it at Niagara University, as ENRP Administrator Tod Kniazuk is doing consultant work for the Hospitality and Training Research Center.

David Lacki (proxy for ENRP Member Richard Geiger) asked why the housing situation is just coming to light. Kniazuk answered that it was just the circumstance of a new Institute director needing time to assess the entire picture at UB, meet with ENRP leadership, and come to a decision. Jo Nasoff (proxy for ENRP Member Charles Webb) offered that the ECIDA could provide space (at least temporarily), but asked why the Institute was no longer interested. Co-Chair Weinstein replied that Institute director Kate Foster was still potentially interested in working collaboratively with ENRP, but not in a formal employer-employee relationship. Weinstein also thanked Kniazuk for volunteering his time since June.

Continuing the discussion of housing, ENRP Member David Rosenwasser suggested basing the decision on the long-term horizon, in a place that provides continuity. Wendel noted that so far Kniazuk has been a member of the New York State retirement system, and that this should be a consideration in looking for new housing. ENRP Member Sean O'Connor added that Niagara County has had county employees working at remote sites. Ellis contributed that an academic institution is a good fit. Finally, Andreucci said that between USA Niagara and Empire State Development there is “plenty of space,” and that it's not uncommon for them to house other agencies.

Moving on to funding, Andreucci asked what the funding sources of the past and future look like. Kniazuk explained that in the past the funding came from the Erie and Niagara County Legislatures, but the strategic plan suggests that in addition member agency contributions and grant funding be sought. Andreucci agreed that there should be membership fees for ENRP; many organizations charge fees, and if they're kept reasonable it shouldn't be a problem. Co-Chair Weinstein asked if ENRP would need to become a 501c3; not if the housing organization was already a non-profit, replied Andreucci.

Ellis inquired if we have any money now. Kniazuk explained that for 2005 there was a contribution from Niagara County, some money from individual Erie County legislators, and some from ENRP Member Hector Titus' organizations. That, however, is all gone. ENRP Ad Hoc Member Lawrence Witul suggested approaching the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, as what we do is part of their mission. Ellis then asked where we would be housed for the remainder of this year. Kniazuk answered that we will establish a P.O. Box, cell phone, and e-mail (P.O. Box 41, Buffalo, NY 14201-0041; 716-912-8236; [tkniazuk@adelphia.net](mailto:tkniazuk@adelphia.net)).

ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro suggested that ENRP spend the remainder of this year planning for the future, and so we should not have meetings for the remainder of the year. Rosenwasser added that he is uncomfortable asking Kniazuk to hold on and work for free, and so will put \$5,000 on the table now for 2005. The Co-Chairs thanked him for his contribution, as did Kniazuk. Ellis agreed that we should use the rest of the year for planning, but noted that we still need to hold the December general meeting to bring the strategic planning process to a conclusion.

Co-Chair Burmaster noted that ENRP will go to the Western New York delegation of the State Legislature for funds as well. When asked how long that would take, Co-Chair Weinstein replied that the state's fiscal year ends March 31, 2006. Funding would be sought from the 2006-2007 budget. Kniazuk added that our membership could help with the state ask; if you know someone, please let us know if you can help.

Anello then said that membership fees are the next thing that should be discussed, and that he is in favor of them. Burmaster noted that the "bare minimum" needed is \$65,000. Lacki added that we need a list of our accomplishments and ongoing projects to strengthen our fundraising efforts (versions of this are in the strategic planning document, but a new version will be handed out at the December general meeting).

The membership then tabled the remainder of the strategic planning suggestions for discussion at the December general meeting, along with further discussion on housing and funding.

ENRP Administrator Tod Kniazuk presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report, which was received and filed with the motion to hear a presentation on the 311 small business system at

the December general meeting tabled due to the continuance of the strategic planning discussion.

Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report, which was received and filed. McMahon added that he would be happy to accompany the Co-Chairs in approaching the state delegation.

Subcommittee Chair David Rosenwasser presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report, which was received and filed. Rosenwasser noted that we need to collectively reengage upper level management from the Seneca Nation and the casino corporation. Anello supported that as well, saying "They're good neighbors, but we need investors." Rosenwasser also added that the ferry service is already growing, and could possibly even loop to Erie County. International travelers, especially, are very frustrated with public transportation on the American side. On the topic of the ferry, Co-Chair Burmaster detailed that Canadian customs already has the project on its list for consideration in 2006.

Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse presented the Transportation Subcommittee report, which was received and filed.

Ferraro presented an update on power relicensing, <http://niagara.nypa.gov> Negotiations continue with those who haven't yet agreed to the settlement. The license was filed in August. Those who haven't yet settled are Buffalo/Erie County, and Niagara University.

Ferraro presented an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, [www.regionalframework.com](http://www.regionalframework.com) They are nearing completion of the draft, but before that the steering committee will again meet and there will be a round of focus groups and public meetings. The draft document should be done in early January, 2006.

There were no updates on the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) or the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative.

There was no old business. Under new business, Co-Chair Weinstein suggested that we schedule a meeting for January, 2006 as "holdover members." This would be done to keep the group's efforts moving forward pending the annual appointment/reappointment of members by the two Legislatures. The membership concurred.

The next meeting date was set for Friday, December 9 at 8:30 a.m. at the Buffalo Niagara Partnership (thanks to ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre). The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 10 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
December 2, 2005